Irrregularities in the Utilisation of drought relief funds

483. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI NAGENDRA NATH OJHA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has found several irregularities in the utilisation of drought relief funds by the State Government; and

(b) if so, the details of the findings of CAG and steps proposed to be taken to ensure that relief funds are not misused in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SBPBK SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) in its Report No. 3 of 1999 (for the year ended March, 1998) has pointed out irregularities in the operation of Calamity Relief Funds (CRF), for natural calamities including drought, by various State Governments.

(b) The CAG Report indicates diversion of funds out of CRF, non setting-up of separate CRF, non separation of CRF from general revenues, violation of investment and expenditure norms, expenditure in excess of norms, retention of funds with executing agencies, outstanding utilisation certificates, deficiencies in cash book and instances of alleged misappropriation etc. The observations have been brought to the notice of the State Governments concerned to take corrective measures and to ensure that the CRF is administered in accordance with the Scheme and the guidelines issued by the Central Government.

Decline in rice production

484. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether ICAR has noted the decline in some areas of the yield of rice per acre;